

The coalition agreement

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The Labour and Alliance parties will form a Coalition Government with the following objectives:

1. To implement a policy platform which reduces inequality, is environmentally sustainable and improves the social and economic wellbeing of all New Zealanders.
2. To restore public confidence in the political integrity of Parliament and the electoral process.
3. To provide stable and effective long-term government for New Zealand without losing the distinctive political identity of either party and
4. To act in good faith between the Coalition partners.

PROCESSES FOR COALITION MANAGEMENT

So far as possible the achievement of the above objectives will be driven by consensus management and the avoidance of surprises.

The Coalition Government will operate within the convention of collective cabinet responsibility, subject to the provisions of this agreement, and the expectation is that cabinet decisions will be taken by consensus.

There will be a standing Coalition management committee comprising the two leaders, their deputies and the two senior whips. Meetings of the committee will be chaired by the Prime Minister. Each party leader may nominate a member of the party outside Parliament to attend meetings as required.

The tasks of the management committee will include dispute resolution and strategic political management of the Coalition.

Where either party leader considers that a distinctive policy matter raises an issue of importance to the party's political identity, the leader will raise this with the Coalition management committee, which will resolve an appropriate course of action, including possibly identifying the matter as one of "party distinction." In this event, there may be public differentiation between the parties in speech and vote which will not be regarded as being in breach of the convention. Such issues are expected to be infrequent and the parties recognise that dealing with them openly and responsibly is critical to the credibility of the Coalition. Differentiation on such issues will not detract from the overall acceptance that the two parties are taking joint responsibility for the actions of the Government.

The cabinet office manual will be reviewed within the first six months of office to ensure that its procedures effectively facilitate the management of the Coalition Government.

POLICY FORMATION

The parties accept that the Executive is responsible to the people through Parliament and this requires a Government policy programme which appropriately balances the electoral platforms of the two parties within overall Government policy.

The policy of the Government will be determined between the parties on an ongoing basis through the normal processes of Government policy development. The key directions for the first term of the Coalition will be outlined in the speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament.

EXECUTIVE

The Government will be formed with 20 ministers inside cabinet, of which 16 will be from the Labour Party and 4 from the Alliance. The number of ministerial or under-secretary positions outside cabinet will be agreed between the party leaders.

Agreed between the Coalition parties on December 6, 1999.

Rt Hon Helen Clark for the Labour Party Jim Anderton for the Alliance.